

July 14, 2010

Committee on Ways and Means
Hearing on Social Security

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to request your consideration of the repeal of the GPO and WEP. After 25 years of working in private industry, I decided to become a public school teacher. While I have made considerable financial sacrifices as a result of this career change, I have gained an immeasurable amount of satisfaction knowing that I am working every day to empower children with the skills and confidence they need to acquire invaluable knowledge.

There are a substantial number of talented, experienced teachers who will be retiring over the course of the next few years. Public schools are looking for qualified, dedicated, and capable individuals to replace these impending vacancies. It is obvious to all that the teaching profession does not carry financial incentive. What is less obvious, however, is the fact that those of us who have worked in private industry and contributed to the social security system in Massachusetts, will risk losing a significant portion of our social security retirement and spousal death benefits because of our decision to work in public service. There is a disincentive, in fact, towards public service in such cases. It seems unjust and unfair to lose benefits we rightfully and honestly earned. I am disappointed, to say the least, that Massachusetts penalizes individuals such as myself.

I ask you to repeal the GPO and WEP and restore the Social Security benefits that so many hard-working individuals have lost and will continue to lose if this policy is permitted to endure.

Respectfully yours,

Sema R. Arakelian
Massachusetts